

Chief Justice  
Maura D. Corrigan

Justices  
Michael F. Cavanagh  
Elizabeth A. Weaver  
Marilyn Kelly  
Clifford W. Taylor  
Robert P. Young, Jr.  
Stephen J. Markman

# News

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 27, 2001

CONTACT: Michael Gadola  
(517) 373-0128

## SUPREME COURT INVITES THREE-BRANCH EFFORT TO IMPROVE TRIAL COURT SERVICES

LANSING – The Michigan Supreme Court today invited the Executive and Legislative branches of state government to join it in developing a new proposal for the continued improvement of trial court services to Michigan citizens.

In a letter to Governor Engler and legislative leadership, the Court urged steps toward constructing a new proposal for trial court reorganization that will build on already successful programs. Those programs include the creation of the family division of circuit court, demonstration projects to test trial court consolidation, and “Next Generation” projects to test additional administrative innovations.

“The people of Michigan have realized many benefits through the work done in recent years, including the coordination and consolidation of cases in the family division, and the greater efficiency, faster case processing, and cost savings in the demonstration projects,” said Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan. “Our task now is to plan for the future, so that all our citizens can share in our progress.”

The Court announced it will hold the first of a series of public hearings on court reorganization on Sept. 13 in Lansing as a beginning step in the new initiative. The hearing will coincide with the annual meeting of the State Bar of Michigan. Judicial associations, the State Bar, and other interested persons and organizations will be invited to comment on all aspects of the subject.

The Court also said it will direct John D. Ferry, Jr., the state court administrator, to provide a report on the judicial resources needed to operate the family division and a written evaluation of the demonstration projects by Oct. 1.

In addition, the Court called upon the Legislature to address the family division’s dependence on judges assigned by the Supreme Court from other courts in a manner that allows for local flexibility in court operations. The Court also urged the Legislature to extend to all Michigan citizens the benefits of the seven demonstration projects now in operation statewide. The projects are located in Barry, Berrien, Iron, Isabella, Lake, and Washtenaw counties, with a multi-circuit project operating in Crawford, Kalkaska, and Otsego counties.